

Alberton Pictograph
Alberton vicinity
Missoula County
Montana

HAER No. MT-44

HAER
MONT,
32-ALBER.V,
1-

PHOTOGRAPH

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HAER
MONT,
32-ALBERTON,
1-

Alberton Pictograph

HAER No. MT-44

Location: Sec. 32, T15N, R22W
Alberton vicinity, Missoula County, Montana

UTM: 11.696750.5209550
Quad: Alberton

Date of Construction: Prehistoric

Present Owner: Unknown

Original Use: Indian Pictograph

Present Use: Unknown

Significance: The Alberton Pictograph site appears to be related to pictographic representations in the Columbia Plateau. Although the Flathead, Pend d'Oreille, Kootenai, and Nez Perce Indians, which inhabited western Montana, are considered culturally similar to groups in the Plateau area, the site has not been attributed to a specific ethnic group. Pictographs in the Columbia Plateau and western Montana generally have been considered to be associated with the vision quest. However, primary information on the Alberton site reveals that this probably was not the site's function and that the site could have been a "map" for groups traveling in the area.

Researchers: Ruth Masten and Glenn Hartmann, Eastern Washington University, 1982

Transmitted by: Jean P. Yearby, HAER, 1985

The Alberton Pictograph Site is a series of three rock art panels and a small rock shelter. The site is located on a large metamorphic rock outcrop. Pictograph motifs are present on a U-shaped escarpment face.

The motifs are exclusively of red pigment, and both solid and outline forms are represented. Series of vertical lines or "tally marks" are the most common motifs. Anthropomorphs include two stick figures, one of which is bent-kneed. The bent-kneed figure is one of only three cases in western Montana in which action is portrayed in pictograph art. Zoomorphs principally are of two kinds: snake-like figures and four-legged figures that resemble large game animals such as deer and bison. A ribbed figure may be either zoomorphic or geometric. The ribbed motif occurs at only one other site in western Montana.

References: Flathead Cultural Committee of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Flathead Indian Reservation, Montana.

Frank Leonhardy, University of Idaho Department of Anthropology,
Moscow, Idaho.